DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 378 UD 031 914

TITLE	Conference on Improving Minority and At-Risk Student Achievement: Blueprint for Excellence Proceedings Report. (Raleigh, NC, March 10, 1997).
INSTITUTION	North Carolina State Dept. of Public Instruction, Raleigh. Div. of Accountability Services/Research.
PUB DATE	1997-05-00
NOTE	42p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Adolescents; American Indians; Disadvantaged Youth; *Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Ethnic Groups; *High Risk Students; Low Achievement; *Minority Groups; *State Programs; Teacher Expectations of Students; Teaching Methods; Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS	*North Carolina

ABSTRACT

The Conference on Improving Minority and At-Risk Student Achievement was convened to help educators, parents, community, and business leaders in North Carolina focus in strategies and ideas that work to raise student achievement levels for low-performing students. This report summarizes the remarks of Michael Garrett, the keynote address of Asa Hilliard, III, and comments from the youth forum that was part of the conference. Michael Garrett spoke about the traditional education and values of Native American children, drawing on experiences of Native Americans in North Carolina, and reminded his audience of the need for teachers to be knowledgeable about the beliefs and traditions of Native Americans. Youth presenters shared their experiences as members of minority groups, and reflected on what is needed to ensure the academic achievement of minority students. Dr. Hilliard spoke of the necessity for high expectations for all students, and gave some examples of programs that have worked in raising the achievement of disadvantaged youth in urban and rural areas. Children will achieve regardless of the method used or the philosophy of the educator if the instruction is delivered properly. Also included is the "Blueprint for Excellence" document participants received as a stimulant to discussion. (SLD)

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ED 411 378

Public Schools of North Carolina

Proceedings Report

for the

Conference on Improving Minority and At-Risk Student Achievement: Blueprint for Excellence

March 10, 1997

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PROCEEDINGS REPORT for the

North Carolina Conference on Improving Minority and At-Risk Student Achievement: Blueprint for Excellence

Friday Center Chapel Hill, NC

March 10, 1997

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Instructional and Accountability Services
Division of Accountability Services

May 1997

Web Site: http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/blueprint.html

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Mary Blair, Asheville High School, Asheville City Schools
Paul Caudle, Phillips High School, Wake County Schools
Mimi Patel, Hillside High School, Durham Public Schools
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FOREWORD

Based on the comments and discussions that were shared at the *Improving Minority and At-Risk Student Achievement* Conference, many participants left the Conference with a sense of urgency about the need to create learning opportunities that will be both challenging and appropriate for the needs of students in our schools and in our State. Teachers, principals, parents, business leaders, central office administrators, university faculty, students, education consultants, legislators, agency directors, and others spent the day discussing the specific changes that are necessary if we are serious about raising the achievement levels of low-performing students. The sense of urgency comes with the realization that we must all work in concert to reverse the trend of low performance among specific student groups in North Carolina.

A recent report to the State Board of Education showed an increase of over 4,000 limited English proficient students since the 1994-95 school year. We must seek to provide optimal learning opportunities for students so that they reach their highest potential. The 1995-96 State Test Results[1] reveal that approximately 60 percent of the students in grades 3-8 are performing at grade level in reading and mathematics. However when these test results are disaggregated we know that there are approximately 50 percent Latino or Hispanic, 59 percent Native American, and over 63 percent African American students who are performing below grade level proficiency. This means that unless there are significant changes in the school experience for these students they will be unable to perform reading and mathematics on grade level by the end of grade 8. This fact increases the likelihood that they will be unable to graduate or perform reading, writing, and mathematics on the twelfth grade level. Our students deserve to complete high school with the skills and competencies that are necessary to be productive workers and good citizens.

At a time when the State's population is becoming more diverse both culturally and ethnically, it is imperative that each school system and community take responsibility for improving the achievement levels of our students. Let's make it our goal that every child will perform at or above grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics by the end of the 8th grade.

We believe that this Conference is the beginning for our State's concerted effort to raise the achievement level of traditionally low-performing students. We urge you to share the recommendations presented in this Report with teachers, principals, parents, and business people in your community to help raise awareness as the beginning step for developing *a Blueprint for Excellence* for your schools.

Mike Ward
State Superintendent

Jay Robinson
Chairman, State Board of Education

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[1] The 1995-96 North Carolina State Testing Results: Multiple Choice End-of-Grade and End-of-Course Tests. NC Department of Public Instruction• Office of Instructional and Accountability Services • Division of Accountability Services, February 1997.

INTRODUCTION

North Carolina adopted the *School Based Management and Accountability Program*, commonly called the *ABCs*, in June 1996. This new emphasis for public education promotes greater accountability for learning in the classroom; focuses on the basic subjects of reading, mathematics, and writing; and encourages local control and flexibility for management and governance of public school systems. The goal of the ABCs is to ensure that North Carolina high school graduates are adequately prepared to participate in meaningful school and work opportunities after high school.

The ABCs defines expected rates of growth for students in each school by subject and grade level; and sets financial rewards for school staff whose students achieve exemplary growth. Schools that do not meet expected growth and have a majority of their students performing below grade level may be designated as "low performing" by the State Board of Education and targeted for assistance and intervention.

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

In North Carolina, as in other States, minority students and others who are "at-risk" of failing academically make up a disproportionate percentage of the students who are unable to meet minimum graduation requirements. The goal is to have all students graduate with a skill and knowledge level that will allow them to be competitive beyond high school.

The Conference on *Improving Minority and At-Risk Student Achievement: Blueprint for Excellence* was convened to help educators, parents, community, and business leaders in the State focus on strategies and ideas that work to raise student achievement levels for low-performing students. Over 725 individuals attended the Conference. Governor James B. Hunt and other key participants such as State legislators, university deans and faculty members, joined parents, teachers, administrators, principals, and students in discussing the day's topic. Conference participants were given the *Blueprint for Excellence* as a guide for implementation and replication. The Blueprint is available on the Internet (http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/blueprint.html).

Representatives of over 35 successful programs and services made presentations during concurrent sessions. Each school system in the State was asked to send a team of a minimum of four participants (the superintendent, a principal, a teacher, and a parent or community leader) to the Conference. Near the end of the day, these teams met in regional conferences (organized in 10 regions) to begin planning a *Blueprint for Excellence* for their respective schools and school systems. Current plans of the Department of Public Instruction are to follow the performance of schools and school systems during the months ahead to determine what progress has been achieved for improving the performance of minority and other students.

Dr. Asa Hilliard III, Fuller E. Callaway Professor at Georgia State University was the keynote speaker. Dr. Hilliard's speech has been summarized in this Report and highlights of key points are presented. The comments from the youth during the Youth Forum have also been summarized in this report. During the morning session, Dr. Michael Garrett of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte described for participants critical teachings given to Native American students and how this knowledge can help teachers of Native American students help them improve their academic achievement.

GOALS, EXPECTED OUTCOMES, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Goals

- To provide encouragement, resources, and share expectations that achievement for minority and at-risk students will improve in North Carolina.
- To provide examples of effective school practices and strategies that have proven to be successful in improving minority and at-risk student achievement.
- To provide team members from local education agencies (school districts) with the opportunity to identify program strategies for replication in their local schools and local school districts.

Expected Outcomes

- That each participant receive current research information on improving minority and at-risk student achievement.
- That each participant identify contacts for future networking.
- That each participant seek to replicate similar discussions, programs, and strategies for improving minority and at-risk student achievement in local school districts.

Conference Guiding Principles

Improving the performance of minority and at-risk students requires the support and commitment of a number of institutions, organizations, and leaders. The Guiding Principles for the Conference are as follows:

⇒ Involving a wide range of constituencies as equal decision-making partners

⇒ Making data driven and/or research-based decisions

⇒ Using a systemic approach to plan, implement, monitor, and modify programs

⇒ Developing a collaborative mission, belief system, and vision

⇒ Allocating resources needed to cause change (people, money, materials, time, and facilities)

⇒ Scheduling adequate time for team members to meet and successfully complete tasks

⇒ Providing an opportunity for all constituencies to have input on decisions

⇒ Encouraging, recognizing, and verifying participant groups and individuals

⇒ Providing a free flow of information to all stakeholders in the school and community

⇒ Empowering administrators to provide quality leadership for collaborative reform

⇒ Developing skillful leadership teams to guide the improvement process

CONFERENCE SPONSORS

The first *Improving Minority and At-Risk Student Achievement: Blueprint for Excellence* Conference was a collaborative effort of over 50 staff members from the Department of Public Instruction and individuals from 16 additional agencies and organizations who served on the Conference Planning Committee (listed on pages 31-32). In addition, the following organizations provided financial support and leadership to help make the Conference a success.

Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)

The State Board of Education is authorized by General Statute 115C-10. Its purpose is to administer and supervise the public school system in North Carolina. Operating principles of the public school system include setting high expectations for students and high standards for schools with a focus on the basics (reading, mathematics, and writing); providing strong accountability for results; holding individual schools accountable for student performance; and ensuring safe and disciplined educational environments. The State Board of Education has thirteen members.

The Department of Public Instruction is charged with implementing the prescribed roles of the public school system for increasing local control and flexibility, and focusing priorities for improving student performance

North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE)

NCAE's mission is to serve and advocate for its nearly 70,000 members and to advance public education. The organization's goals include providing leadership for attracting and retaining quality teachers; using teacher expertise and site-based decision making to determine how students are taught; participating in efforts to shape school reform and educational policy; providing quality opportunities for teachers' professional development; being a leader for preserving public schools; involving the community to support public education; and establishing high-tech communications systems between NCAE and schools. NCAE is guided by a state elected board of directors, president, and vice president.

North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA)

NCASA's mission is to ensure quality learning experiences for all students through visionary and effective leadership. Its membership includes superintendents, assistant and associate superintendents, central office directors and supervisors, principals, assistant principals, university professors of education and other interested educators. NCASA is a professional educational organizations that serves the entire school administrative leadership team. The organization is governed by a board of directors comprised of representatives from the entire membership.

The American Federation of Teachers/North Carolina (AFT/NC)

The American Federation of Teachers/North Carolina is the state affiliate of the nearly one million member parent organization, the American Federation of Teachers. The organization is also an affiliate of the 170,000 member, North Carolina AFL-CIO. AFT/NC membership is composed primarily of teachers and teacher assistants, but also represents office personnel, bus drivers, and custodians. AFT works collaboratively with many statewide education organizations because of the fundamental belief that by working together AFT's primary goal of achieving optimal teaching and learning conditions in our public school can best be met.

North Carolina Farm Bureau

Farm Bureau is a private, non-profit general farm organization. Representing approximately 387,000 North Carolina families, Farm Bureau is committed to improving the quality of life for rural and agricultural people. Legislative representation of members' interests remains the primary focus. Additional services and programs such as, Ag in the Classroom, assist in building the organization.

North Carolina School Boards Association

The NC School Boards Association (NCSBA) is composed of the 117 local boards of education whose membership determines the policies which govern the education of public school students in North Carolina. NCSBA was founded in 1937. Its primary goals are to initiate and augment positive educational change by providing relevant information about public school education; serve as a resource for local boards and board members; and inform the public concerning the needs of public education.

North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission

The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission was authorized by General Statute 115C-363.22. Its purpose is to administer the Teaching Fellows Program, a four-year scholarship loan program for high school seniors interested in teaching in the State. Teaching Fellows receive $5,000 each year. The scholarship/loan must be repaid by teaching four years in a North Carolina Public school.

Public School Forum of North Carolina

The Public School Forum works with diverse and frequently competing organizations in the education community to develop and study public policy issues such as, technology, school improvement, and accountability. The Forum's goals are to frame and build consensus for recommendations that have the potential to strengthen North Carolina's schools; serve as a credible source of bipartisan information about schools and schooling; and to be a bridge between the business and educational communities of North Carolina. The Forum is governed by a 60 person board of directors and is managed by a full-time staff.

NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussions and conclusions relating to the Conference have been summarized into Next Steps and Recommendations which will be incorporated into the Work Plan of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Make data driven and/or research-based decisions

- Require schools and school systems to disaggregate student performance data by the following student characteristics: gender; race/ethnicity; limited English proficient; and disability in school improvement reports, State and local Report Cards, and other accountability reports for the ABCs.

Use a systemic approach to plan, implement, monitor, and modify programs

- Follow and recognize school's progress on improving minority and at-risk student achievement. Use the *Blueprint for Excellence* as part of the monitoring and follow-up activities.
- Set goals for improving the performance of minority and at-risk students for the next year. Host a second Conference and report the progress achieved since March 1997.

Build the capacity to raise student achievement levels within schools, school systems and communities

- Relate improvement of student performance of minority and at-risk students to teacher performance and opportunities for recognition and rewards.
- Encourage, support, and model the incorporation of culturally relevant content into the North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* curriculum to ensure representation of all cultures.
- Encourage and support replication of practices and programs that have proven successful toward improving the performance of minority and at-risk students.
- Encourage and support teachers' use of various classroom instructional strategies that complement the variety of learning styles students bring to the classroom.
- Provide instruction and training in techniques, instructional strategies, and practices for working with diverse students and low-performing students for teachers, counselors, and principals.

Allocate resources needed to cause change

- Introduce legislation in the North Carolina General Assembly that is related to improving minority and at-risk student achievement.
- Enhance DPI services and staffing in Accountability, Instructional Services, and Teacher Education Divisions to support this initiative.
- Minority and at-risk students should be guided by teachers, counselors, school districts, and parents to take challenging or higher level courses such as algebra, chemistry, and Advanced English.
- DPI should model expected staffing and staff development practices for local school systems.

Encourage, recognize, and verify participant groups and individuals

- More effective parent involvement programs are needed in schools.
- Identify North Carolina schools with high achieving minority and at-risk students and share their experiences with other schools.

Provide information to all stakeholders in the school and community

- Prepare and distribute a Conference Proceedings Report.
- Hold regional meetings to build awareness and capacity for addressing this initiative.
- Develop communication strategies such as on-line support and a newsletter on student performance.

MORNING SESSION

Presider:

Eddie Davis
Member of the State Board of Education and English Teacher at Hillside High School (Durham Public Schools)

Remarks and Greetings

The Honorable James B. Hunt
Governor of North Carolina

Stan Williams,
Secretary's Regional Representative
Southeast Region
U. S. Department of Education

Dr. Michael E. Ward
State Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction

Dr. Henry L Johnson
Associate Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction

Introduction of Speaker — Dr. Rose Marie Lowry-Townsend, Principal
Pembroke Middle School

Topic: Listening to the Four Winds

Dr. Michael Garrett
(Eastern Band of Cherokee)
Assistant Professor
Department of Counseling, Special
Education, and Child Development
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

SUMMARY OF DR. GARRETT'S COMMENTS (Edited by Dr. Cassandra Atkinson)

- Native American children learn at a very early age the traditions of their tribe through basic values, beliefs, and customs which guide their way of life. Lessons such as those taught to Dr. Michael T. Garrett by his grandfather while sitting on the rocks by the Oconaluftee River in Cherokee, North Carolina helped shape his understanding of the relationship between elders and children, leadership, the significance of animals, harmony and balance, and the meaning of family. The lesson of what a small child sees when he looks in the water (he sees the water, fish, rocks, his own reflection) teaches that "he is the keeper of everything he sees with his eyes and to see the good that is reflected

(Summary of Dr. Garrett's comments continued)

in everything that occurs in life. Life is a lesson, and you must learn the lesson well to see your true reflection in the water."

- Despite the diversity that exists among Native Americans there are many common values that characterize traditionalism across tribal groups and geographic regions. These traditional values include:

  * Cooperation and Sharing. Whatever belongs to the individual also belongs to one's relatives, and vice versa. Because of this emphasis, many Native American children will go out of their way to avoid interpersonal conflict such as criticism, interference, arguments, and fights, preferring to withdraw either physically, mentally, and emotionally to preserve the relational harmony and balance.

  * Humility. Many Native American children are taught early that they are important and unique as individuals, that they are also part of the greater whole, known as the "Circle of Life." Boasting of one's accomplishments and loud behavior that attracts attention to oneself are discouraged in Native American tradition. Sometimes, a Native American child who is singled out or "put on the spot" will drop his or her head and eyes as a sign of respect for any honored authority (such as a teacher) or elder.

  * Being. The traditional way of life emphasizes a unique sense of being rather than doing. For Native American children raised in the traditional way, the purpose of life centers around paying attention to the lessons and experiences gained from doing things, rather than focusing one's attention primarily on getting things done or the outcome or product.

  * The lesson of the Opposites. The Eagle feather is sacred among Native American traditionalists; it represents duality and tells the story of life. The lesson of opposites is that of choice. Any two opposites are often part of the same truth. If one considers the Eagle feather with its light and dark colors, one could argue that the dark colors are far more beautiful and therefore, naturally more valuable or vice-versa. Regardless of which color is said to be more beautiful, or necessary, or valuable, the truth is that both colors come from the same feather, both are true, they are connected, and it takes both to fly.

- Native American children share many traditional beliefs and values that are given to them by the elders and other wise persons in their family and tribe. Family refers to a very broad circle unlike the connotation of many western influenced families. Teachers and other educators are encouraged to understand more about the values and cultures of Native American children so that they are challenged to the point that their school performance is optimal. It is also very important for our teachers to be knowledgeable about the history and experiences of Native American people because it shows respect and encourages students to excel.

YOUTH FORUM

Introductions	Anna F. Worley Student Advisor, State Board of Education Broughton High School
Moderator	Dr. Dudley Flood, Former Executive Director NC Association of School Administrators

Topic: How Can Minority and At-Risk Students Achieve Academic Excellence?

Youth Forum Participants

Paul Caudle, Senior
Phillips High School
Wake County Schools

Chance Lynch, Seventh Grade
Eastman Middle School
Halifax County Schools

Mimi Patel, Senior
Hillside High School
Durham Public Schools

Paulina Guzman, Sophomore
Cary High School
Wake County Schools

Mary Blair, Junior
Asheville High School
Asheville City Schools

SUMMARY OF STUDENT'S COMMENTS: LEARN FROM STUDENTS

The five youth presenters shared information about their experiences as minority students and reflected their ethnic and cultural backgrounds as members of Latino, Asian, American Indian, and African American ethnic groups. Their comments have been summarized into the following four areas:

High Expectations and A Challenging Curriculum

- Students should set goals for themselves and work hard to reach those goals. There are fewer obstacles to advancing in this country than in other countries.
- Teachers should be encouraging for students rather than discouraging. Teacher expectation is very important to a student's success. If teachers believe students will excel this will be reflected in the students' work. Teachers should set high goals and expectations and should not pre-judge the ability of students.
- Teachers and schools should encourage and advise students in course choices. Teachers should stress that students take advanced, honors, and college prep courses.

- Teachers should be good role models and lead by example. What teachers and other adults do is more closely modeled by students than what they say.
- Students sometimes know the answer to things to which teachers do not know the question.

Create Environments That Promote Learning (Positive School and Classroom Climates)

- In addition to pointing out the areas students need to improve, teachers should take time to give additional help to students.
- Schools and teachers should work to help students improve tolerance and positive attitudes for one another. Encourage students to value diversity.
- Teachers must maintain discipline which is easily done if students are being taught with enthusiasm, where active learning strategies are used, and the students are engaged in learning.
- Provide a school climate that promotes learning and that exposes students to real-life experiences and resources.
- The classroom teacher is the key to student success. The classroom teacher sets the tone and climate for learning. The teacher's demeanor determines if the subject is going to be interesting or boring.
- Select the right people to teach--someone that can relate well, motivate, understand the total child, and cares for all students.
- Teachers should help promote and encourage a positive learning attitude, especially for first and second year high school students.

Teachers and Schools Must Care About the Whole Student

- Encourage students and teachers to learn about the culture of other students especially those cultures that may be different from their own. Encourage schools to offer cultural awareness programs that also recognize the contributions of African American, Native American, Latino and Asian cultures to American society.
- Students achieve the greatest success when they are accepted for themselves.
- The teachers that show a real interest in students and relate to students as individuals are the most successful teachers.
- School is a family and family members care for one another.
- Teachers should frequently provide opportunities for students to succeed. Teaching must be interesting to students in order for them to be motivated. Learning should be fun, exciting, and safe.
- Attend to students' financial, medical, and social needs as much as possible. These circumstances affect students' ability to focus on learning, school, as well as their attitude.
- Teachers should know the needs of students.
- All school staff should seek to establish positive relationship with each student.

Redefine the Role of School and Home to Help Students Achieve Academic Excellence

- Many times (in order to get ahead) minority and at-risk students have to work twice as hard as other students.
- Smaller classes help students find their true identity.
- Involve parents. Parents must be held accountable for their children when they hinder teaching and learning.
- Active learning opportunities work best for students. Students need and want to be given learning opportunities that are designed to increase their verbal and critical thinking skills--these are needed if students are to be successful in the real world.
- Learning is a collaborative process. It involves teachers, parents, students, and the community.
- Minority and at-risk students need equal opportunities to participate in programs, projects and other extracurricular activities.
- Programs that help students make the transition from high school to college are needed.
- Redefine the role of school and home. Both are needed to help students achieve.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Presider:

Dr. Henry L. Johnson
Associate Superintendent
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Remarks and Greetings

Dr. Prezell Robinson
Vice Chairman
State Board of Education

Bill McNeal
Associate Superintendent
Wake County Schools

Reverend Mark Royster
Board Chairman, Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools

Dr. Richard Thompson
Deputy Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction

Dr. Sherron Crawford
Assistant Superintendent
McDowell County Schools

Introduction of Speaker — Dr. Henry L. Johnson

Topic: How We Produce Excellence With Traditionally Low-Performing Students

Dr. Asa Hilliard III
Fuller E. Callaway Professor
Educational Social Policy
Georgia State University

SUMMARY OF DR. HILLIARD'S COMMENTS (Edited by Dr. Cassandra Atkinson)

Dispelling or Countering the Myths

There are many current examples of schools, programs, and initiatives that have achieved success in raising the academic achievement of traditionally low-performing students. This can be done. In order for educators and schools to achieve success with traditionally low-performing students they must change the way they view learning and teaching. "North Carolina's goal of raising the achievement levels of traditionally low-performing students is doable. It is already being done in a number of places in this country."

Poor children can achieve academic excellence. Children from low-income neighborhoods that are surrounded by undesirable activities such as drugs and crime can learn. Students who are four years behind academically can catch up, stay even with their age peers, and even pass them. Children who speak Ebonics and other languages can do Calculus. Children from low wealth schools and districts can learn. Schools without the typical technology resources found in many schools can produce students who are high achievers. Special programs are not a prerequisite or a necessity for children to succeed. White teachers can teach African American children. Children whose mothers used crack cocaine while they were pregnant can learn. Children with attention deficit disorders can be taught in the regular classroom.

Power teachers, teachers who can raise the achievement of low performers to levels of excellence, are needed. Power schools, schools that can raise the achievement of low performers to levels of excellence, are needed if low-performing students are going to achieve.

Examples of Schools, Research, Ideas, and Programs Where Traditionally Low-Performing Students Have Achieved Academic Excellence

- Kipp Academy (Bronx, New York and Houston, Texas)
- Longfellow School (Pontiac, Michigan)
- A.G. Hilliard School (North Forest Independent School District, Houston, Texas)
- Vann School (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)

(Summary of Dr. Hilliard's comments continued)

- West Virginia Department of Education

  West Virginia published a study entitled "Achieving Despite Diversity" which stressed the importance of disaggregating student performance data. Disaggregated data gives school staff the total picture of student achievement. The study challenged the notion that the economic, social, and ethnic make-up of students determines if they are going to be successful academically. It compared two groups of schools. One school group had students from low socio-economic backgrounds who achieved academic excellence. A second school group also had students from low socio-economic backgrounds; yet these students did not achieve academic excellence. The study concluded that it cannot be the kids. "If the kids from the same socio-economic backgrounds are served in one school and they are on the bottom and then in another school, students from the same socio-economic background, are raised to the top, it has to be the treatment that the children received that made the difference." The study also found that there are really two groups of people in education: there are those who know how and are doing and there are those who don't know and are not doing.

- University of Tennessee at Knoxville

  In a study by Sanders and Rivers teachers were studied rather than students. The study found that students who are assigned to "good" teachers excelled. Students assigned to "poor" teachers did not reach high achievement levels. "Good" teachers consistently produce high-performing students and "poor" teachers consistently produce low-performing students. The study concluded that teaching alone makes the difference. The students' home life does not have to change in order for students to be successful; the teaching must be challenging and of high quality.

- High School in El Paso, Texas

  The physics and chemistry faculty at a "letter" high school in El Paso, decided that all students in the school would learn chemistry and physics. The faculty determined what staff development they needed; worked with the students, and taught them physics and chemistry. Two years ago this school sent seven students to MIT who majored in physics; in spite of the fact that they are bilingual and poor. This school also sent students to Yale and Princeton. Their goal is to send their students to ivy league schools. "Imagine a group of teachers who look at children who are poor and Latino and say you can do physics at MIT."

- Marcus Garvey School

  The Marcus Garvey School (where most students speak Ebonics) teaches Calculus to fifth grade students. The school teaches the teachers how to teach. Third graders can learn algebra. You can rescue or teach college students who never had it in their whole program to achieve.

(Summary of Dr. Hilliard's comments continued)

- Clark Atlanta University

  Dr. Shabazz, mathematics professor at Clark Atlanta University, is responsible for teaching over half of the black people with doctorates in mathematics in America. This school teaches its faculty how to teach students.

- The *Bell Curve*

  Murray and Herrnstein authors of *Bell Curve* purport that you can predict students' achievement levels based on where they are along a normal distribution curve. The "Bell Curve" tells the public and teachers that it is impossible to go from one end of a curve with a whole school to the other end of the curve. However, it happens all the time. What North Carolina is trying to do is doable. It happens all the time without changing the child's family, income, or language.

- Oakland and Ebonics

  The Oakland School District is trying to teach standard English to its students. The children come to them speaking Ebonics and standard English. They know that it is important to respect children. The media and others have misrepresented what Oakland is doing by saying that Oakland was "teaching Ebonics". Not true. Oakland has said that for these children, Ebonics and West African Hasmits-Bantu languages are genetically related; meaning a non-accidental relationship between the two languages. People do not inherit languages genetically. This is a discussion about linguistics not biology. So the language that the children are speaking here in North Carolina which some teachers may call "speech impaired", "unintelligent", or "language deprived" are not appropriate descriptions because the people who are assessing them have no knowledge of linguistics. In other words you are supposed to sit down and ignore what children bring to school. That's disrespect in the worse possible way. You will never teach children to learn if you disrespect them.

- "*Every Child Can Succeed*" Film Series

  Every Child Can Succeed gives examples of schools achieving amazing success with students. This series presents schools such as the Vann School in Pittsburgh, PA that have achieved academic success with low-performing poor students. **(Note: This series may be obtained by contacting the media staff in each school system in North Carolina.)**

- The Role of the School Leader or Principal

  The school leader must ensure that all of the faculty and staff have the same goals. The school leader should spend more time on instruction than any thing else in the school; "less time on lunch money, more time on school".

(Summary of Dr. Hilliard's comments continued)

- Standards

  You have to have standards that describe your educational goals. The standards that you set are the standards that you will reach. If you set minimum competency standards that is what you will reach. If you set high standards you will reach high standards. If you decide that every child has to have completed an algebra course, has to be a writer, has to know something about general chemistry by 12th grade, this is what they will do. But if you look at a child because he or she is dirty, didn't comb his or her hair, came out of a crack infested neighborhood, and decide that those standards are inappropriate for that child, and you set some other standard for that child, that's the standard that you and that child will reach.

- School Reform

  It does not matter what the form of the school is if you are not going to execute within the form. Every method works. I've done studies on what reading method works best for minority children. What reading method works for them is the same reading method that works for anyone else. The problem is whether the reading method that you promised gets delivered. If you deliver the method the right way it will work. We all hold certain philosophical beliefs over others. You might be a whole language person. You might be a phonics person. It really doesn't matter except at the philosophical level. Children will achieve regardless of the method used or the philosophy of the educator if instruction is delivered properly.

- School Climate

  A professional climate in the school culture as opposed to a dictatorial climate and culture is also important. A culture that relies on the judgments of teachers; that holds teachers to high expectation levels just as it holds students to high expectation levels is needed. The appropriate school climate includes expectations for learning essential skills.

  A doctoral student wrote a dissertation called "*We're Family*". She found that the one thing that seemed to matter most at the school was whether there was harmony, unity, and love for the students and faculty.

- Discourage the use of terms that label students such as "Minority" and "At-Risk" because they are inappropriate and do not show respect for students.

(Summary of Dr. Hilliard's comments continued)

- Raising SAT Scores

  The State Superintendent for South Carolina, with the help of the University of South Carolina faculty, found that a significant portion of the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) involves algebra and mathematics. He decided that South Carolina would concentrate on teaching algebra and mathematics to students as a way to raise SAT scores.

  They also found that algebra was being taught primarily to students who were in the "college prep" curriculum but not to students in other curriculums. South Carolina decided to make it so that every student can take algebra. Then it was found that they did not have enough "college prep" classes for everybody to take algebra. The State then decided to add enough algebra classes to meet the needs of students. South Carolina also found that students who have taken the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) do better than those who have not taken PSAT. In other words, "practice makes perfect". In South Carolina, students who say they are going to college are given opportunities to practice for the SAT by having multiple opportunities to take the PSAT.

- Increasing Vocabulary

  You know its not every word in the dictionary that a child has to know. There is a book published by Barron called 1,100 Words You Need to Know to Pass Standard Tests. Barron reviewed the standard tests and found the words that kept recurring on standard tests. One particular school began to teach those words. They taught etymology, spelling, pronunciation, and usage. When this is done daily in schools what will happen? Using all that language, how many words will a student know at the end of a year? One hundred and eighty words minimum. How many words will students be able to use at the end of three years? What will happen to the vocabulary of students?

- Enhanced Learning Opportunities

  We don't need isolation in the school. We need exposure for students. Many of the African American children in the schools have not seen much of the world they will have to live in. The Kipp Academy takes students on field trips to places such as the Space Center near Houston, to museums and other places. One school on the West Coast simply took their students to see the Golden Gate Bridge. The students had not seen it, yet it was only one street car ride away from their school. Teachers at the Kipp Academy have to stay at school until 5:00 p.m. every day. They come back on Saturdays. They have to come back for two weeks over the summer and they do come back because they love the kids. They are willing to make those kinds of sacrifices. Diversity is not a problem. Charisma is not a problem. You don't need a special program.

(Summary of Dr. Hilliard's comments continued)

- Technology

  You don't need "high tech" technology. These are excuses for why nothing is happening. I want every kid to have a laptop. However, you do not have to have a laptop computer in order for children to learn. At the Garvey School they do not have laptops. They just happen to be the highest achieving elementary school in America. It has nothing to do with poverty. It has nothing to do with violence. The Vann School is in the middle of a violent community. It has nothing to do with crack cocaine. Babies that are pre-natally exposed to crack are indistinguishable from other babies by the age of 6 if you nurture them the same way you nurture other babies.

- Parent Involvement

  People say if the parents don't come to the school you cannot raise the student achievement. Of course you want the parents to come but anybody that takes that position is setting kids up for failure. If you ask the principal at the Vann School in Pittsburgh, "do you have to have the parents involved before you can be number one in Pittsburgh?" She would tell you, "the parents that I've worked with are trying their best to survive. They can't do all the things that we can do here in the school. When the kids come here they become our kids and our responsibility and we move them to levels of excellence with or without the parents." That's the kind of attitude you have to have if you are going to be a power teacher. You want parent involvement but you can still raise student achievement levels without it. We know this because there are people around who have already shown it; so this can be done.

- Beliefs of Educators

  You cannot underestimate the power of teaching. The biggest thing that we have to deal with has nothing to do with the techniques or instructional strategies that you need to know in order to improve student achievement. The biggest thing that I see that we have to deal with is our beliefs. Many people simply do not believe that the children that we're talking about have the capability to achieve at the levels that I'm talking about. Major distortions such as the *Bell Curve* tell us not to believe that all children can learn, excel, and be high achievers.

- Socio-Economic Status and Teacher Education Programs

  Some of us in teacher education teach all the excuses; such as excuses about socioeconomic status and achievement. We teach you that socioeconomic status and achievement are associated with each other. They are associated with each other but why one does one not cause the other? Socioeconomic status tells you what kind of treatment the child is going to get. Not what kind of child this is. It tells you how we are going to treat children. Poor children are treated differently in this society than rich children. That's why we see in New Trier High School the expenditure per pupil may be as much

as $12,000 per child and then for a public high school in Chicago the expenditure per pupil is $5,000 a year. That's what Kozol calls "savage inequalities".

- Modeling Success with Low-Performing Students

  You have to have models of success of those schools who are successful. You need to see them. Staff development by people who have never raised a school to a level of excellence is probably not going to be very useful for you. The people in your state who have all ready done these things should be the ones you use to do staff development. So you have to deal with the beliefs and you have to deal with accountability. This is something you can do at the state level now. There is something wrong when a principal can remain in a school seven, eight, nine years and the achievement never changes. That is an accountability problem.

- Disaggregate Student Performance Data

  We have to disaggregate the information like they did in Virginia and Tennessee, so we can find out who is doing what. If all that happens is that we can say on the average the state is doing this or the city is doing that. This is not enough. No you need to disaggregate so you can find out what this school is doing, what that school is doing. We have to deal with the structure of staff development and make sure that only those people who are high achievers are the ones who do the staff development. We have to stop the variety store of staff development. We have to deal with public awareness of success potential for the schools. Right now many people in the public don't know what they can expect from public schools. They don't know that public schools can be powerful with their kids and for that reason they are unable to give schools the kind of support that they need.

- Special Education

  There are too many children in Special Education programs and too many on Ritalin. Ninety percent of Ritalin in the world is sold in the United States of America. Most of the industrial countries of the world do not use this drug. Ritalin is a type II drug: like crack, like cocaine. Some kids are actually taking Ritalin now and shooting up with it. They are not taking it to be out of class, they are taking it to run an underground drug dealership so that other students can shoot up and get high. We are passing Ritalin out in schools on a regular basis. We are passing Ritalin out to pacify students. What really pacifies students is a good curriculum and good teaching. We must deal with the quality of special services.

- Licensing and Accreditation

  Some people get a license because they score high on the national teachers exam, but they cannot teach. There are some people who can teach but cannot pass the exam. Passing the exam does not mean that you can teach. We need to protect kids from bad performers but we really have to find out what tells us what bad performance is. I can guarantee you the National Teachers Examination doesn't do it.

  We are going to have to deal with accrediting teacher education. I'm a teacher educator and I ought to be held responsible for being able to teach teachers so that they can teach kids. Moreover, I ought to be able to teach kids or else I shouldn't be a teacher educator. The accreditation process which certifies as competent people who cannot teach and people who cannot teach teachers is something that has to be looked at very carefully. Just because I sit down and write 50 articles, give four lectures, watch and see how people are actually certified in the course of teacher education and then how their institutions are accredited, does not make me a quality teacher educator.

  There are a number of things that we are going to have to look at very closely if we are serious about raising the achievement of children. Some of it has to do with the teacher and the child. Some of it has to do with having more forward looking public policies in support of education that will enable us to support those things that work well and finally we have to establish the goals that succeed for children.

- Setting Goals for Low-Performing Students/High Expectation

  What I would recommend for North Carolina is the same thing recommended in a report from the National Alliance of Black School Educators some time ago called "Saving the African American Child". By the way these goals are good for all students. We recommend that every child be able to do Calculus by the time they graduate from 12th grade. No child is supposed to miss it. This can happen. Go talk to Michael Johnson in New York who just opened a Science Skills Center. He was an engineer working on the weekend tutoring kids and they him as a principal. He now is the head of the Science Skills Center with 850 kids and a lottery for admission. Last year not one dropped out, not one fight, every child in the Science Skills Center including special education students must take and pass the Regency Examination for the state of New York. They have to get a regency diploma. There are no special diplomas.

  Now why is it that one person can do it and another person cannot? Yes you can have these high standards but you can't have the high standards unless you have high input to reach the high standards. The same thing is true of writing and chemistry. We need courses in writing and chemistry. Every child must learn chemistry. We had a lot of things in there that represented high standards that represents the level at which children are supposed to reach.

(Summary of Dr. Hilliard's comments continued)

- Culturally Relevant Curriculums

We have to do things that tell kids that we respect them and respect who they are. The question was asked of the kids in the Youth Forum today, "How many felt that when they looked at the curriculum they could see themselves?" Almost every person that responded gave an answer that you shouldn't be proud of. Because the kids must not only see themselves but they must see truth in the curriculum. There is much about the Indian history of North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia that could be taught to African American, White, Latino, Asian, and Indian children that would be truthful and at the same time teach them to respect these cultures. The history and migration of Creek, Seminole, Maroons, and other groups is fascinating and should be taught to our children. They will love it. They must see themselves in the curriculum. There is a book on this called the "*Exiles to Florida*" published by the University of Gainesville. Would this story be of any interest to any of the high school students here in North Carolina? Is that a problem? Could they see themselves in the curriculum if this story was told? There are a lot of interesting stories. You could write essays on that. It shows respect to tell the truth.

So you have two things going for you. You have the capacity to respond to the children with respect through the curriculum, and secondly you have the power of teaching provided that you observe your own models of success and learn from those models. The achievement of children is well within your reach without anything extra. You have all the power you need, provided you have the will.

Dialogue/Question and Answer
Instructions for Blueprint

Dr. Elsie Leak, Director
Division of School Improvement
Department of Public Instruction

CONCURRENT SESSIONS LEARN FROM OTHERS' EXPERIENCES

Reading and Literacy

Moderator: Eddie Davis, Member
State Board of Education

Presenters:

Rachael Cozart
Randolph Sessoms, Assistant Superintendent
Regina Peppers, Reading Recovery Teacher
Vikki Tillman, Early Literacy Teacher
Montgomery County Schools

Sheila Hatley, Reading Tutor
Tip Harris
Success for All Program
Montgomery County Schools

Participants shared information on the K-2 reading literacy initiative in the Wilson County Schools and the Reading program used in the Montgomery County Schools. Presenters from Wilson County described the Early Literacy Program, a K-2 initiative, designed to prevent reading deficiencies. Their goal is to have all students reading at or above grade level by the end of the second grade. Presenters from Montgomery County discussed the "Success for All Program" and classroom strategies used in K-5 schools. Their goal is to have every child reading at or above grade level.

Parent Involvement

Moderator: Linda McLaughlin, Teacher
Hoke County Schools

Presenters:

Ramona Glenn, President
North Region PTA
North Carolina Parent Teacher Association

Wanda Wesley, BRIDGES Coordinator
Parent Center
Cumberland County Schools

Jeanette Council, Parent Involvement Specialist
Cumberland County Schools

Rhonda Truitt, Principal
Grove Park Elementary School
Alamance-Burlington Schools

This session featured successful initiatives in parental involvement by the North Carolina Parent Teacher Association, the BRIDGES to Parent Involvement Process, and the Comer School Development Program at Grove Park Elementary.

Community Involvement and Collaboration

Moderator: Lina McIlwain, News Reporter
TV Station Fox 22

Presenters:

William "Bill" Bell, Associate Director
UDI/Community Development Corporation
Durham, NC

Winston Thomas, Director
100 Black Men of Greater Charlotte
Charlotte, NC

Joseph Canty, Director
Support Our Student (SOS)
Raleigh, NC

Pattie Sanders-Smith
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Greenville, NC

The programmatic and organizational efforts of four groups were discussed. The following initiatives were presented:

- General Education Diploma (GED) preparation and construction skills training for clients ages 16-24 who are dropouts, at-risk students, low income, and unemployed.
- An after school program for middle school students that works to improve academic performance and to reduce the incidence of juvenile crime.
- An organization that seeks to assist African-American male students in developing high self-esteem and an appreciation for the value of a good education by providing citizenship leadership development; motivational workshops, and enrichment and community activities.
- The efforts of Pitt County's Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta to recruit minority students to become educators. Minority male recruitment is emphasized.

Preparing Teachers for Diverse Classrooms: Pre-Service and In-Service Education for Teachers

Moderator: Linda Love, Consultant
Instructional Services
Department of Public Instruction

Presenters:

Dr. Edwin D. Bell, Department Chair
Division of Educational Leadership
East Carolina University

Dr. Geraldine Munn, Assistant Professor
Department of Elementary Education
Fayetteville State University

Gertrude Williams, Principal
RN Harris Integrated Arts Magnet School
Durham, NC

Sheron Curle, Curriculum Facilitator
RN Harris Integrated Arts Magnet School
Durham, NC

This session provided participants with information about a unique teacher education program that is a collaborative effort involving universities, local school districts, and a local technical assistance center. The session also included a presentation by administrators from a nationally recognized elementary school in Durham that raised student achievement through comprehensive professional development.

School Climate

Moderator: Marvin Pittman, Executive Director
High School Instruction
Durham Public Schools

Presenters:

NC Department of Public Instruction:
Division of School Improvement
Dennis Stacey, Section Chief
David Bryant, Consultant

Dr. Nay Howell,
Program Specialist for Minority Achievement
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Rita Roberts
Academic Counseling and Training
Training Sessions (ACTS) Program
Durham Public Schools

Anne Lee, Character Education Consultant
Wake County Schools

Floyd Mitchell, Principal
Neal Middle School
Durham Public Schools

The session included the following:

- A brief description of the organization of the Comer School Development Program and how Neal Middle School has embarked on a four-year project to validate the six Critical Pathways toward improving student achievement.
- Details on how Charlotte's Minority Achievement Program assists schools in establishing climates conducive to student learning.
- Information on how school climate is positively affected by character education.
- An overview of how ACTS, a family/school focused program for African-American students and parents, helps families to build partnerships with schools.
- Statewide efforts of the Safe and Drug-Free School Team to improve classroom and campus safety and security.

Setting High and Realistic Expectations

Moderator: Louise Lamm, Director, Ag in the Classroom
North Carolina Farm Bureau

Presenter: Dr. Daniel Cockman, Superintendent
Thomasville City Schools

The superintendent of a North Carolina public school system described the programs and community involvement strategies that were used to improve student performance.

Strategies for Success With At-Risk Youth

Moderator: Mildred G. Bazemore, Section Chief
Division of Accountability Services
Department of Public Instruction

Presenter: Claude Odom, Division of Youth Services
Department of Human Resources

This session offered an opportunity for participants to engage in a discussion on strategies that are effective when working with at-risk youth. Some descriptions of youths served by Youth Services were discussed with special emphasis on educational and vocational services. Respective roles of the Division of Youth Service schools and Local Education Agencies in working with at-risk youth were also discussed.

Alternative School Programs

Moderator: Dr. Norman Camp, Staff Assistant
Instructional and Accountability Services
Department of Public Instruction

Presenters:
North Carolina Center for the Prevention of School Violence:
Joanne McDaniel, Research Director
Jennifer Brown, Acting Coordinator
Richard White, Coordinator

Pat Johnson, Principal
Phillips High School
Raleigh, NC

Presenters discussed alternative schools and programs within schools that have proven successful. They utilized data to demonstrate that students in alternative settings have improved attendance, behavior, and test results. A supplemental curriculum designed for alternative students was presented.

Using Data to Plan for Student Success

Moderator: Lou Fabrizio, Director
Division of Accountability Services
Department of Public Instruction

Presenters:
David Christenbury, Principal
Northeastern High School
Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Schools
Brandon Smith, Principal
Sherwood Githens Middle School
Durham Public Schools

NC Department of Public Instruction:
Jan Williamson, Consultant
Bill Scott, Consultant
Division of Instructional Services
Dr. Doris Tyler, Consultant
Division of Accountability Services

This session provided an overview of testing data by a testing consultant on ways to use and analyze data to improve student achievement. Two school principals shared ideas and strategies for using test data. Two curriculum consultants shared instructional strategies that use data to help improve achievement.

Quality Principles to Assist At-Risk Students

Moderator: Priscilla Maynor, Consultant
Exceptional Children
Department of Public Instruction

Presenters:

Dr. Sandi Lee, Assistant Superintendent
Sherry Hoyle, TQE Specialist
Lincoln County Schools

Washington County Schools:
Clifford A. Phifer, Principal
Washington Union High School
Dr. Zebedee Taylor, Director,
Roanoke Development Center

Presenters from two school systems discussed how quality principles and practices have influenced student learning. Lincoln County's presenters described how quality principles were positive to influences on student behavior and motivation. Washington County's presenters described how quality principles have been used for the past two years to reduce failure rates for African-American males; identify problem areas; and develop intervention strategies.

Mentors and Tutoring

Moderator: William Martin, Senator
North Carolina General Assembly

Presenters:

Pryce Baldwin, Secretary
William Osborne, President
Raleigh-Wake African-American Male Initiative

Aura Camacho Maas, Director
Latin American Resource Center

Larry Fields, Principal
Latham Elementary School
Winston Salem/Forsyth Schools

This session provided examples of tutoring and mentoring programs that are school and community based; an example of an elementary summer school program and the continuum of instruction for after-school and in-school tutoring where specific strategies were developed for Level I students; and information on the activities of the Latin American Resource Center founded in 1991 to assist individuals and communities throughout the Americas in reaching their potential in cultural education and economic development.

***Every Child Can Succeed* Resource Room**

Moderator: Belinda Black, Consultant
Division of Accountability Services

This was a repeating video presentation. ***Every Child Can Succeed*** is a set of six video programs presenting case studies of eight schools in North America that are helping disadvantaged students achieve academic success. For information on obtaining copies of this video series, contact your local school system media coordinator or Sue Scott at (919) 715-1728.

SCHOOL SYSTEM TEAM MEETINGS – REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Region 1	Coordinator	Artie Kamiya
Region 2	Coordinator	Emmett Kimbrough
Region 3	Coordinator	Priscilla Maynor
Region 4	Coordinator	Bobbie Newton
Region 5	Coordinator	Gloria Bowman
Region 6	Coordinator	Pat Wilkins
Region 7	Coordinator	Mildred Bazemore
Region 8	Coordinator	Dee Brewer
Region 9	Coordinator.	Sylvia Massey
Region 10	Coordinator	Linda Love

GROUP REPORTS AND SUMMARY

Moderator: Dr. Gary Williamson, Section Chief, Reporting
Accountability Services Division

CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Henry Johnson
Eddie Davis III

ADJOURNMENT

REGIONAL CONFERENCES: (Assignments of school systems to regions were made to assure an equal number of participants in each regional conference and were not intended to represent any other geographical districting or boundaries.)

REGION 1: Buncombe, Asheville City, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood
Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell

REGION 2: Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Yancey, Alexander
Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba

REGION 3: Hickory City, Newton-Conover City, Davidson, Lexington City,
Thomasville City, Davie, Winston-Salem/Forsyth,
Iredell-Statesville, Mooresville City, Stokes, Surry, Elkin City

REGION 4: Mount Airy City, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin, Anson, Cabarrus, Kannapolis City, Cleveland, Kings Mtn. District, Shelby City Gaston, Hoke

REGION 5: Lincoln, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond, Rowan-Salisbury, Scotland, Stanly, Albemarle City

REGION 6: Union, Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Edenton-Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Edgecombe, Gates, Halifax, Roanoke Rapids City, Weldon City

REGION 7: Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Northampton, Pasquotank, Carteret, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, Washington, Bladen, Brunswick

REGION 8: Columbus, Whiteville City, New Bern-Craven, Cumberland, Duplin Greene, Jones, Lenoir, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Robeson

REGION 9: Sampson, Clinton City, Wayne, Alamance-Burlington, Caswell, Chatham, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Harnett, Johnston, Lee

REGION 10: Guilford, Nash, Orange, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City, Person, Randolph Asheboro City, Rockingham, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wilson

COMMENTS ON THE CONFERENCE

The following comments and suggestions were gathered from the Conference Evaluation Surveys completed by participants, members of the Planning Committee, and the Department of Public Instruction's leadership.

Prepare a Conference Proceedings Report

Where Do We Go From Here?

- Excellent Conference. This subject has been avoided too long. "Let's keep it on the front burner."

Expand Involvement of Other Key Stakeholders

- Involve more school districts from the western part of the State.
- Involve the Superintendent, administrative staffs and Regional Education Service Alliances.
- Develop Regional and LEA conferences.

Future Conferences

- Conference on Improving Minority and At-Risk Student Achievement should be an annual event.
- Encourage superintendents and central office staff to distribute the information to school level staffs in time for them to register for the Conference.
- Focus on the needs of all teachers and the needs of teachers of low-performing students Identify and showcase specific teaching strategies that have been

successful in raising student achievement among low-performing students.

- Involve successful (teachers who have produced high achieveing students) teachers and others (community leaders, parents, business groups, etc.) to be presenters.
- Listen to the youth.

  Continue the Youth Forum. This gives an opportunity for youth to talk and for educators to listen. Make the Youth Forum a priority.
- Have a follow-up Conference that presents instructional in strategies for meeting the needs of at-risk students.
- Include examples of successful programs that are being provided for all ethnic and cultural groups such as American Indian, Asian, African American, Hispanic or Latino.

Accountability

- There should be some accountability in each LEA. Capture the interest of the Superintendents.
- Incorporate Blueprint for Excellence ideas into the school improvement plans of low-performing schools.
- Encourage the use of disaggregate data for understanding the performance and achievement of low-performing students.
- Relate student performance of low-performing students to teacher performance.

Training and Staff Development

- Send teams of staff from schools (parent, teachers, and principals) to Conference for training.
- The Department of Public Instruction should provide additional resources for teachers on the curriculum; teaching mathematics and reading; understanding and teaching to different learning styles.
- Introduce high expectations (instruct the teachers) concepts in the lower grades.
- Use more peer learning opportunities in the classroom.
- Some of the current educational practices are at odds with the learning needs of minority and low-performing students.
- Determine what happens in the public school system that reduces children's desire to learn.
- Learning is relational for minority students; The teacher must care for the minority student in order for them to learn; Teachers need to build close relationships with students in order for them to learn.
- Develop an ungraded sequence in grades K-3.
- Teachers want instruction in techniques, programs, or practices.
- Provide multicultural training. Use minority development as an element on the performance appraisals of teachers.
- Engage the intellect and the heart. Unlock the potential of underachievers.

APPENDICES

Conference Staff And Planning Committee

Chairs:

Eddie Davis III
Member at Large
State Board of Eduction

Dr. Henry L. Johnson
Associate Superintendent
Instructional and Accountability Services
Department of Public Instruction

Conference Coordinator:

Dr. Cassandra Atkinson, Consultant
Reporting Section, Accountability Services Division
Instructional and Accountability Services

Department of Public Instruction Staff:

Faye Atkinson, Computing Support Technician, Reporting, Accountability Services Division
Mildred Bazemore, Chief, Testing, Accountability Services Division
Belinda Black, Consultant, Reporting, Accountability Services Division
Gloria Bowman, Consultant, Teacher Education, Human Resource Management Division
Dee Brewer, Consultant, Evaluation, Accountability Services Division
Dr. Grova Bridgers, Director, Charter Schools Division
Dr. Norman Camp, Staff Assistant, Instructional and Accountability Services
Bryar Cougle, Consultant, Arts Education and Healthful Living, Instructional Services Division
Draughon, Bobbye, Consultant, Staff Development Coordination, School Improvement Division
Hollingsworth, Debora, Consultant, Staff Development Coordination, School Improvement Division
Artie Kamiya, Chief, Arts Education and Healthful Living, Instructional Services Division
Emmett Kimbrough, Consultant, Compensatory Education, School Improvement Division
Dr. Elsie Leak, Director, School Improvement Division
John Leak, Drug-Free Schools and School Social Work, Instructional Support, Sch. Improvmt. Div.
Logan, Gladys, Consultant, Effective Practies, School Improvement Division
Pope-Lett, Angela, Statistical Research Assistant, Evaluation, Accountability Services Division
Linda Love, Consultant, Mathematics and Science, Instructional Services Division
McGrady, Bill, Chief, Compensatory Education, School Improvement Division
McLaughlin, Miriam Specialist, Community Svcs.Infor., Communications and Information Div.

Department of Public Instruction Staff (continued):

Sylvia Massey, Chief, Effective Practices, School Improvement Division
Priscilla Maynor, Parent Consultant, Policy Monitoring and Audit, Exceptional Children Div.
Sylvia Moore, Program Assistant, Effective Practices, School Improvement Division
Bobbie Newton, Consultant, Special Programs, Exceptional Children Division
Patricia Taylor, Program Assistant, School Assistance, School Improvement Division
Dr. Doris Tyler, Consultant, Testing, Accountability Services Division
Gail Walton, Office Assistant, Reporting, Accountability Services Division
Roland Whitted, Chief, Community Services and Pub. Sales, Communications and Information Div.
Patricia Wilkins, Consultant, Effective Practices, School Improvement Division
Kay Williams, Director, Communications and Information Division
O' Linda Williams, Program Assistant, Charter Schools Division

Statewide Committee Members

Pryce Baldwin, Program Manager, Helping Hands Program, Wake County Schools
J. B. Buxton, Director, Policy Research, Public School Forum
Larry Fields, Principal, Latham Elementary, Winston-Salem/Forsyth Schools
Dr. Christine Fitch, Professor of Education, East Carolina University
Gladys Graves, Director, Teacher Fellows Program, Public School Forum
Dr. Thomasina Hardy, Associate Executive Director, NC School Boards Association
Morris Johnson, Director of Student Access and Success, NC Dept. of Community Colleges
Cora Jones, Vice Principal, West Pender Middle, Pender County Schools
Louise Lamm, Director of Ag in the Classroom, NC Farm Bureau
Robert L. Logan, Assistant Superintendent, Lee County Schools
Dr. Rose Marie Lowry-Townsend, Principal, Pembroke Middle
Linda McLaughlin, Reading Teacher, Hoke County Schools
William McNeal, Associate Superintendent, Wake County Schools
Gerri Martin, Director of the Teaching Fellows Program, NC State University
William Newkirk, Associate Executive Director, NC Association of Educators
Marvin Pittman, Director of High School Instruction, Durham County Schools
Dr. Pam Riley, Executive Director, NC Center for the Prevention of School Violence
Maria Isabel Segovia, Migrant Education Data Specialist, Pender County Schools
Earl Sledge, Teacher, Rocky Mount Senior High
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CONFERENCE AT-A-GLANCE

8:30 - 9:00	REGISTRATION	Lobby
9:00 - 10:30	OPENING SESSION	Auditorium
	10:30 - 10:45 BREAK	
10:45 - 12:00	YOUTH FORUM	Auditorium
12:00 - 1:45	LUNCHEON	Trillium Room
1:45 - 2:00	BREAK	
2:00 - 3:30	LEARN FROM OTHERS' EXPERIENCES (Concurrent Sessions)	
	Reading and Literacy	Redbud A
	Parent Involvement	Redbud B
	Community Involvement and Collaboration	Grumman Auditorium
	Preparing Teachers for Diverse Classrooms	Seminar Room
	School Climate	Dogwood A
	Setting High and Realistic Expectations	Mountain Laurel A & B
	Strategies for Success With At-Risk Students	Bellflower A & B
	Alternative School Programs	Dogwood B
	Using Data to Plan for Student Success	Wildflower A & B
	Quality Principles To Assist At-Risk Students	Laboratory
	Mentors and Tutoring	Magnolia
	Every Child Can Succeed Video	Board Room
	3:30 - 3:45 BREAK	
3:45 - 4:30	SCHOOL SYSTEM TEAMS MEET IN REGIONAL CONFERENCES	
	Region 1	Redbud A
	Region 2	Redbud B
	Region 3	Dogwood A
	Region 4	Mountain Laurel A&B
	Region 5	Bellflower A & B
	Region 6	Dogwood B
	Region 7	Seminar Room
	Region 8	Laboratory
	Region 9	Grumman Auditorium
	Region 10	Wildflower A & B
	Every Child Can Succeed Resource Room	Board Room
	Moving Beyond Dialogo, Exploring New Concept for World Class Education	Magnolia
4:30 - 5:00	GROUP REPORTS AND SUMMARY	Auditorium
5:00	ADJOURNMENT	

Improving Minority and At-Risk Student Achievement: Blueprint for Excellence

Introduction

This Blueprint provides a series of phases that can be used by individuals or groups, to develop a plan of action for improving the performance of minority and at-risk students. The conventional wisdom is that the most successful efforts for improving student performance will involve multiple organizations, interests, and perspectives. Such involvement will help ensure ownership of the solutions and outcomes and provide access to available resources. It is important to be sensitive to the needs of all involved groups. Blueprint activities should not give the impression that one group or another is somehow to blame, or that the problems belong only to one group. The expectation is that the performance of all students will improve in meaningful ways as result of these efforts.

The initiator(s) of the Blueprint in each community may vary according to local needs and interests. In some communities the local school system may initiate the Blueprint, in other communities business or civic leaders may take the lead. It is most important that communities take responsibility and initiate steps to establish a plan of action and strategies for improving student performance. This process will integrate a wide variety of information and data about students, existing programs and services, and key community resource persons. The data recommended for use in the Blueprint are not intended to be exhaustive, e.g., other data relevant to individual schools and the school system should also be included. The Blueprint is predicated upon the following Principles:

Principles for Excellence

- **Involve a wide range of constituencies as equal decision-making partners**
- **Make data driven and/or research based decisions**
- **Use a systemic approach to plan, implement, monitor and modify programs**
- **Develop a collaborative mission, belief system, and vision**
- **Allocate resources needed to cause change such as people, money, materials, time, space**
- **Schedule adequate time for team members to meet and successfully complete tasks**
- **Provide an opportunity for all constituencies to have input on decisions**
- **Monitor progress towards your organization's mission and goal accomplishment**
- **Encourage, recognize and verify participant groups and individuals**
- **Provide a free flow of information to all stakeholders in the school/community**
- **Empower administrators to provide quality leadership for collaborative reform**
- **Develop skillful leadership teams to guide the improvement process**

Definitions

Minority: A racial, religious, political, national, or other group (such as disabled persons) regarded as different from the larger group of which it is part.

At-Risk Students: A term liberally used to describe students who are "at-risk" of academic failure. These students may be performing below expected levels of proficiency; may be engaged in disruptive or non-productive behaviors such as absenteeism, violence, drug/alcohol use; and may come from families that have been identified as low income or low socio-economic status.

Blueprint for Excellence

PHASE 1: The Initiation: Build Core Support

Improving student performance is a significant challenge and requires preparation and the involvement of all stakeholders in the community. The primary goal is to develop a strong and influential core of concerned individuals who share a vision of what needs to be done and who are willing to help do it.

A. Conduct an honest and non-judgmental assessment of student performance.

✓ 1. Identify the possible reasons why students are experiencing low performance in your school and school system
✓ 2. What are the contributing factors?
✓ 3. Which of these factors do you have control over? Remember that we cannot control students' socioeconomic status, gender, or ethnicity. Collected data should include descriptions of both controllable factors and indicators of minority status or "at-riskness".
✓ 4. What can be done to eliminate or reduce the influence of these controllable factors on student performance?
✓ 5. Review disaggregated data for elementary, middle, and high schools by gender, ethnicity, and other factors in addition to comparisons of the average student performance

B. Identify resource individuals and organizations in the community. Consider involving:

✓ 1. Persons well known in the target community or population
✓ 2. Persons who are knowledgeable about the history and development
✓ of the community
✓ 3. Parents and family members
✓ 4. Persons who are oriented to conceptualization and/or action
✓ 5. Experienced persons with a variety of talents and resources and a
✓ record of perseverance in addressing community problems
✓ 6. Persons with civic and organizational identification
✓ 7. Persons who are on the receiving end of the problem
✓ 8. Youth leaders and high school students
✓ 9. School personnel
✓ 10. People in the business community
✓ 11. Church leaders (Ministers, directors of religious education)

C. Contact members of the key constituencies and enlist their support.

D. Determine their perceptions of the problem, the resources they are willing to contribute to help improve student performance, their preferences for action, and the role they are willing to assume in the process.

E. Hold a first meeting with the core support group and discuss roles and responsibilities. Agree on a beginning strategy to involve the appropriate people. Keep a record of the people you have contacted, their perceptions of the problem, and their suggestions for action. The number of persons in the core group will vary according to the number of essential stakeholders in each community.

✓ = Suggested Critical Activity

PHASE 2: Develop Ideas and Specific Strategies

Decide who will be participants and collaborators in the improvement process.

Think! Talk! Listen! Ask questions. Discuss the obstacles or barriers faced by the community that will impede success. Be candid.

A. Decide who has important information and should be contacted.

B. Define specific questions that are related to improving student performance and how to solve them--the what, why, when, and how questions.

C. Your goal is not to reinvent the wheel but create a better performing wheel.

✓ 1. What has already been done to address low student performance in your community; avoid strategies that may or may not have met with success in the past

✓ 2. Make an initial assessment of available resources

✓ 3. Ask individuals and groups what they are willing to do to help

✓ 4. Discuss action strategies

PHASE 3: Build Community Interest and Support for Improving Student Performance

A. Build community interest through contact with organizations and influential individuals. Offer to present your ideas at meetings of community groups.

B. Develop contacts with the media.

PHASE 4: Reach Consensus on a Plan of Action

A. Be inclusive. Include the people you have contacted and that have been involved in previous meetings and discussion groups.

B. Let group members give their perceptions of the most pressing problems and causes.

C. Reach an agreement on the problems or contributing factors for low student performance that should be addressed first.

D. Discuss the kinds of feasible, visible, and effective actions that would help eliminate the problems or contributing factors that have been identified.

E. Agree on a preliminary action or strategy.

PHASE 5: Develop the Blueprint for Excellence

The Blueprint should include a:

✓ A. Mission Statement

✓ B. Goals Statement

✓ C. Description of Essential Tasks

Suggested Tasks

✓ 1. Review school system and school policies, procedures, practices, curriculum guides, lesson plans, instructional materials, etc. to be sure they are free of bias or that they do not negatively affect any racial, ethnic, gender, religion, cultural, or disabled group. For example, this review may reveal policies that essentially discourage, although unintentionally, minority and at-risk students from enrolling in more academically challenging courses such as higher level mathematics and sciences

✓ 2. Analyze **all** student outcome data for your school district and school (test scores for the past three years in every subject; other factors such as student attendance data; dropout data; number of hours students watch television/play video games; number of

✓ = Suggested Critical Activity

hours students spend doing homework; number of hours students spend working; number of students suspended/expelled; number of students in academically gifted programs; number of students in exceptional children programs; ratio of students per teacher; number of students in Achievement Levels I, II, III, and IV; number of students proficient in the five core high school courses; number of students taking the Scholastic Achievement Test and how well they've done; number of students who have passed the North Carolina Competency Tests in Reading and Mathematics; number of students enrolled in alternative programs

✓✓ 3. How many students are performing at Level I or II or below proficiency levels for high school courses?

✓✓ 4. Disaggregate the above data (# 2 and 3) by gender , ethnicity, and other factors

✓ 5. Meet with teachers, principals, curriculum coordinators, parents to candidly discuss the data and other information. Form a school-wide committee that is representative to address the *Blueprint for Excellence*

✓ 7. Contact school system curriculum coordinators for ideas and assistance. Involve them.

✓ 8. Use faculty who are knowledgeable about teaching minority and at-risk students to train others or teach their classes

✓ D. Timeline

✓ E. Evaluation Plan (Evaluation may be conducted by the core group or an independent group according to available resources; evaluations should be formally tied to improvement objectives and goal.)

PHASE 6: Inform and Educate the Larger Community About Your Plan

A. Establish a beginning date.

B. Build a strong, documented case for the need and for the probable success of the effort to improve student performance.

✓ 1. Continue to solicit resources and generate support for the programs

✓ 2. Use local media and develop a plan for communicating with the public

✓ 3. Share expectations and describe how and when progress will be monitored and reported to the community

PHASE 7: Implement the Blueprint for Excellence

A. Use sound techniques to assure the continuing interest and commitment of key people.

B. Maintain an action focus.

PHASE 8: Evaluate and Improve Your Blueprint for Excellence

A. Identify program objectives you plan to evaluate.

B. Decide how you will ascertain the amount of progress made toward each of your objectives.

C. Collect information about the progress of the Blueprint Initiative.

D. Summarize and publicize the results for potential funders, media, community reports, etc.

✓ = Suggested Critical Activity

Blueprint developed by Dr. Cassandra Atkinson and incorporated Bain, J.G. and Herman, J. L., (1989) Improving opportunities for underachieving minority students: A planning guide for community action. Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, Los Angeles: CA.

If you would like to be added to the Mailing List please provide the following information:

Name_____

Address_____

_____

Telephone Number_____

FAX Number_____

Please check the appropriate box below.

☐ Teacher School: _____

☐ Parent

☐ Principal School: _____

☐ Central Office Staff/Administrator

School System_____

☐ School Staff School: _____

☐ Superintendent School System_____

☐ Interested Citizen

☐ Other Specify _____

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May 1997 • NC Department of Public Instruction